

Fort Mifflin, Officers' Quarters
Mud Island
Marine and Penrose Ferry Road
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1225-F

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. PA-1225 F

FORT MIFFLIN OFFICERS' QUARTERS

Location: North corner of Fort Mifflin, Mud Island, Marine and Penrose Ferry Roads, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: City of Philadelphia.

Present Use: Offices of historic site museum.

Significance: Built in 1814, the officers' quarters are typical of Fort Mifflin construction, yet embellished with ornamental woodwork and ironwork.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In his report to Col. W.K. Armistead dated October 31, 1820, Major Babcock described "a range of quarters for officers 96 by 28 feet and two stories high built in 1814" (#475, RG 77, NAB). In 1836, the officers' quarters were renovated at the same time as the soldiers' barracks, "including floors, lathing, and plastering and roofing, doors, windows, sash and casing" (Delafield to Gratiot, Nov. 22, 1836, RG 77, NAB). Henry Belin's 1839 drawings show this building with kitchen wings, no longer extant, extending from the rear on each end (CGM #71). For additional information, see Fort Mifflin History (PA-1225).

Prepared by Alison K. Hoagland
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Fall, 1979.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The officers' quarters are easily distinguished from the soldiers' barracks by their two-story height and ornamental ironwork.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

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B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Excluding the approximately 6'-6" wide porch and gallery structure which extends the length of the facade, the building measures 80'-10" (six-bay front) x 19'-6 1/2".
2. Foundations: Brick and stone masonry.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The red brick walls are laid in common bond with a header course every eighth course. There are no arches over the masonry openings. Traces of whitewash remain on the exterior in protected locations.
4. Structural system: The load bearing walls support the floor structure and the roof structure.
5. Porches: Eight, two-story columns support the gallery and the roof structure of the porch which extends the length of the southeast front elevation. The round columns are turned from solid logs, have squared bases set on beveled gneiss plinths, pass through the narrow boarding of the gallery flooring, extend to a boxed beam, and terminate with Doric-type capitals. At the gallery level, which has a narrow board ceiling, the columns are inset with wrought iron balustrades. Each section is a trellis motif flanked by "X" motifs set with cast iron rosettes at the crossings. An exposed iron structure supports the thin longitudinal joists of the gallery floor. At grade, the porch is paved with slate contained within gneiss curbing. Originally two stairways at each end of the porch provided access to the gallery and the second floor of the quarters. The south stairway, which survives adjacent to the walling, extends in a straight run to winders near the gallery floor. Below the carriage of the stairway, which lacks railings, vertical boarding extends to the paving.

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6. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys extend through the roof ridge and each has a two course corbel below a single course at the top of the stack.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: At the southeast elevation two doorways at each floor level are flanked by window openings and have ovolo backband trimmed frames which are hung with pairs of vertical board doors, each having three interior panels. Panel molding defines the molded, raised panels. The doors are hung with strap hinges on pintles and are secured with cast iron rim locks. Opening from the first floor onto the northwest rear brick paved area are two doorways with similar frames, though lacking doors.

b. Windows and shutters: Typically, the window openings, with similar fenestration at the front and rear elevations, have ovolo backband trimmed frames and plain, projecting sills. The openings, which are boarded up with plywood, originally had twelve-over-twelve-light sashes at the first floor and twelve-over-eight-light sashes at the second floor. Blinds with adjustable louvers were hung at the openings. At the southwest end elevation, with its single window opening at the first floor, is a small square opening providing access to the attic within the gable. The opposite end of the building has a similar access door above the single windows at the first and second floors.

8. Roof:

a. Shape and covering: The gabled roof is raised and lengthened on the front elevation to extend in an unbroken pitch over the porch structure and is

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covered with slate shingles laid over 4'-0" long cedar shingles, 9" wide, pegged in places with 1'-0" exposure.

- b. Cornice and eaves: At the entablature below the porch eave an applied fillet separates the architrave and frieze spaces and a small bed molding is set below the corona with an applied beaded fascia, probably a ground for a missing crown molding. The boxed cornice has returns at the end elevations. At the rear elevation a beaded board extends under the eave and continues up the rakes as bargeboarding. A small rake molding is located at the half gables of the end elevations of the porch which are sheathed with horizontal, beaded boarding.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Two suites of double rooms are separated by a central transverse masonry partition. Each suite is subdivided by a chimney breast containing back to back fireplaces and a vestibule at each outside front and rear doorway.
- b. Second floor: The second floor plan, similar to the first floor plan, lacks rear doorways and vestibules.

2. Flooring:

At the first floor, the original narrow, random width flooring which survives at the second floor has been replaced with modern wood flooring.

3. Wall and ceiling finish:

The walls are furred out and plastered over original plaster. A modern sheetrock ceiling is at the first floor, while the second floor's plastered ceiling appears to be original.

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4. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Typically the interior doorways have single fascia architrave trim with an ovolo backband and heading. In several instances plain boards trim the openings. Six-panel doors, where existing, are hung at the vestibule doorways on each floor. Double doors with three vertical panels in each leaf, matching the six-panel doors with their traditional panel arrangement, are hung at the doorways of the first and second floor closets which are built-in between the chimney breasts and the vestibules. At the first floor, molding defines the door panels. Second floor door panels generally lack this molding.
- b. Windows: The window trim is modern.

5. Decorative features and trim:

The built-in closets have either shelves or peg boards. Wood chimney pieces at the first floor have thin, fluted trim and plain corner blocks below bracketed mantel shelves. At the second floor, in conjunction with mantel shelves somewhat more traditional, single fascia architrave trim with a backband and beading surrounds the fireplace openings. Beaded baseboarding extends around the rooms.

6. Hardware:

The existing interior doors are hung with butt hinges and were secured with cast iron rim locks, several of which survive or are ghosted.

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7. Heating:

The first floor fireboxes have been rebuilt and opened for fireplaces. The brick fascias, with flat arches, are unpainted or unplastered. At the second floor, the fireboxes retain early coal grates set within plastered fascias.

D. Site and Surroundings:

Parallel to the northwest rampart of the north bastion, the Officers' Quarters is perpendicular to and northwest of the Soldiers' Barracks (HABS No. PA-1225-E) and is connected to it by a slate walk. At each end elevation, within gneiss curbing and extending across the rear, is brick paving laid in a herringbone pattern. A brick gutter is located adjacent to the brick paving of the end elevations, the slate walk from the Soldiers' Barracks, and the slate paving of the porch. The gutter connects from the south corner to the drainage system extending around the West Magazine (HABS No. PA-1225-G) and under the west rampart. Stone and concrete retaining walls extend around the brick paved areas and roughly define the locations of the original kitchen wings which had one-bay side elevations with eight over eight light sash, were two stories, and had low gabled roofs extending perpendicular to and below the main roof's rear eave. Each wing, with rear fireplaces, opened into each end room and onto the side brick paved areas of each end elevation. Access to the second floor level of the wings was provided by interior service stairways.

Prepared by Rodd L. Wheaton
Architect
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Spring, 1974.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Fort Mifflin projects of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) were carried out during the summers of 1969 and 1970 with grants from the Haas Community Funds in cooperation with the Philadelphia Historical Commission, the Independence National Historical Park, and the Shackamaxon Society, Inc. The projects were under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief, HABS. The 1969 survey team was supervised by R. Michael Schneider (Texas A & M University) with student assistant architects Allan H. Steenhusen (Iowa State University), Bruce V.A. Bonacher (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), and Malcolm Heard, Jr. (Tulane University). The 1970 survey team was supervised by Allan H. Steenhusen (Iowa State University) with architect Ronald B. Tjerandsen (University of Washington) and student assistant architect John T. Shumate (Carnegie-Mellon University). The drawings were completed in 1971 by HABS architect Allan H. Steenhusen and student assistant architect Tim Wolosz (University of Cincinnati). The drawings were edited in 1972-73 under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief, HABS, by HABS architects Rodd L. Wheaton and John A. Burns with student assistant architect K. Barry Peckham (University of Cincinnati). Historian for the project was A.C. (Gus) Hamblett until 1972. The data was then edited by several members of the HABS staff, including Rodd L. Wheaton, John A. Burns, and Philip Hamp, and completed by Alison K. Hoagland in 1979.